

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982 - 1983

---

12 JANUARY 1983

DOCUMENT 1-1146/82

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr MÜLLER-HERMANN, Mr NOTENBOOM, Mr von WOGAU,  
Mr BLUMENFELD, Mr HERMAN and Mr BARBAGLI  
on behalf of the EPP Group

with request for an early vote pursuant to Rule 42(5)

to wind up the debate on Oral Question Doc. 1-149/82

on the competitive position in the automobile market



The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to Oral Question Doc. 1-149/82,
  - B. having regard to Parliament's resolution of 17 December 1982 on the Eleventh Report of the Commission on Competition Policy,
  - C. having regard to the Commission's preliminary draft regulation (EEC) on the application of Article 85(3) of the Treaty to certain types of distribution and service agreements relating to motor vehicles,
  - D. having regard to the views expressed orally by a Commission representative in the joint debate on the automobile industry,
  - E. having regard to Parliament's resolution of 13 January 1981 on the European automobile industry,
  - F. having regard to the views expressed by the Commission on the European automobile industry on 16 June 1981,
- 
- 1. Reaffirms its belief that, whilst competition policy is a crucial factor in industrial policy, since it ensures the continued free play of market forces, healthy competition can only exist where the market conditions in the various Member States of the Community are not fundamentally different;
  - 2. Notes that the retail prices for cars which are recommended or in practice applied, after deduction of VAT and all special taxes on use or registration, in some instances differ substantially between Member States; that this phenomenon is not limited to cars but applies also to other consumer goods; and that, in the course of time, the discrepancies in prices change, and even become reversed;
  - 3. Recognises that the existence of price discrepancies (for identical goods) is compatible with the Common Market and that the EEC Treaty does not confer on the Community authorities any responsibility for price control measures, but notes that the existence of major price discrepancies for certain periods of time can be an indication of distortions of competition;



4. Notes that the discrepancies in car prices are very probably due in one respect to distortions of competition, for which manufacturers and dealers cannot be held responsible, involving notably differences in market conditions (levels of taxation on cars, price control measures, variations in exchange rates, etc.); however, there is also a suspicion that individual manufacturers or dealers on occasion seek to impede parallel imports of their products by potential direct purchasers;
5. Notes also that neither the existence of fundamentally different market conditions nor the obstruction of the free movement of goods are compatible with the principles of the Common Market;
6. Shares the Commission's belief that the sale of automobile products through a limited number of specially qualified appointed dealers (selective distribution) helps to improve the distribution and production of goods and to promote technical and economic progress, and that it can be taken as read that consumers in particular benefit appropriately from the resulting advantages;
7. Calls on the Commission, therefore, to investigate to what extent the real causes of the established price discrepancies lie in:
  - differences in actual market conditions, or in other circumstances for which the Member States' governments are responsible,
  - practices on the part of manufacturers or dealers which are detrimental to competition, notably abuses of the selective distribution system;
8. Calls further on the Commission to propose measures, on the basis of these studies, to eliminate the real causes of distortions of competition - and thus of price discrepancies; in this context, consideration should above all be given:
  - to what measures might profitably be taken by the Member States in the fields of fiscal, economic and monetary policy,
  - to whether the ending or opening up of the selective distribution system by allowing retailers who are not appointed dealers to operate is an appropriate means of eliminating the causes of price discrepancies, and what effects such action would have on the competitive capacity of the the automobile industry and dealers in general, the employment situation



in the automobile sector, the safety of motor vehicles and the maintenance of an effective service network for consumers;

9. Calls on the Council to adopt the appropriate measures without delay once the Commission has submitted its proposals;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

